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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 002049

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF U.S. SPEAKER ON TRAFFICKING IN
PERSONS: MARIA JOSE T. FLETCHER, TRACKER NO. 21830

REF: Tegucigalpa 00926

A. Name of Speaker/Date of Program: Maria Jose T. Fletcher, supervising attorney in the Florida Immigration Advocacy Center (FIAC) and the director of LUCHA: A Women's Legal Project, returned to Honduras August 18-21, 2004, for a second series of seminars on trafficking in persons (TIP), sponsored by the Office of the Honduran Delegate to the OAS Inter-American Commission of Women (ICW).

B. Summary of Topics/Venues/Audiences: Post invited Dr. Fletcher to return as the keynote speaker at the seminars on "Prevention of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Children and Adolescents in Honduras" organized by the Office of the Honduran Delegate to the OAS Inter-American Commission of Women, Ambassador Soledad de Ramirez. The seminars were held at hotels in the northern cities of Puerto Cortes, Central America's main port on the Caribbean, and Tela, a mayor tourist area. Both cities are vulnerable areas with relatively high levels of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and women. Approximately 80 participants attended the seminar in each city and included representatives from the local, departmental and national government, the Honduran Congress, NGOs working in this area, law enforcement, tourism sector, civil society, and the media. PAS arranged several press events for Dr. Fletcher before, during, and after the seminars, which provided an opportunity for the Honduran authorities and public to understand of the importance the USG puts on fighting this transnational crime.

During her presentations, Dr. Fletcher discussed the difference among illegal immigration, TIP, and alien smuggling, and drew on her own experience in dealing with a number of cases. She discussed how the U.S. system works, from identifying the victims to protecting and treating them to penalizing the criminals, always stressing the need for networking among all players. Throughout her program, Dr. Fletcher called attention to the need for Honduras to work on stronger legislation and better implementation of the law to control traffickers, as well as the need to better health and education programs.

Dr. Fletcher noted that Honduras was named as a Tier Two Watch List country in the Department of State's 2004 TIP report, and therefore that it needs to take action sooner rather than later to avoid sanctions. She encouraged Honduran authorities, the private sector, NGOs, and the press to address the issues pointed out in the TIP report and to work together to produce positive changes. She called for better application of the laws, networking with the NGOs to identify and register places where CSEC takes place, and the creation of databases to share information.

The Post distributed the section on Honduras of the 2004 TIP Report, as well as a handout on generic mechanisms that should be taken to effectively combat TIP, and other IIP materials.

C. Effectiveness of Speaker: Dr. Fletcher is an undisputable expert in her field who reaches her audience with simple and concrete information on the tragedy of this crime. Her day-to-day contact with the victims and deep knowledge of the legal aspects of TIP, along with her excellent bilingual skills and warm personality, connect her immediately with her audience. She is a forceful speaker who calls on her audience to overcome the obstacles that prevent the different sectors from working together to fight this abominable transnational crime.

D. Quality of IIP Support: Excellent. IIP/T/GIC Cindy LaCovey fully supported the Post to secure Maria Jose Fletcher for this program.

E. Results/Impact: Outstanding. TIP Speaker Maria Jose Fletcher's program enabled the Post to continue raising awareness among the Honduran audiences on the crime of TIP and to encourage effective coordination between the public

and private sectors, civil society and the media on anti-TIP efforts. Key GOH officials in the fight against TIP remembered her fondly from her last visit and greatly valued the opportunity to discuss TIP issues with her. Post works closely with Ambassador Soledad de Ramirez to keep the TIP issue on the agenda.

The program supported the MPP themes of Human Rights, Illegal Drugs, Economic Development, Regional Stability and Mutual Understanding. The program drew the attention of the public and local authorities to the urgent need to combat TIP.

Palmer